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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how, through the use of video, successful classrooms and a large number of teachers can be brought together to improve the teaching of "at-risk" students. The project is designed to present the key elements of good teaching and successful instructional programs to teachers and prospective teachers. Descriptions are given of the five components that comprise the project: (1) an introductory program (a 30-minute motivational videotape) presenting the rationale for the project and presenting vignettes of effective instructional practices and programs as a preview of the other tapes of the project; (2) videotapes illustrating teaching and instructional programs that have demonstrably worked with "at-risk" youth; (3) videotapes that can be used to train personnel in each local school system to make and use their own videotapes as a training strategy; (4) a handbook providing background information, resource information, and a discussion guide; and (5) a training program for participating agencies' staff in the use of the project's materials. (JD)

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A WORKING PAPER
PREPARED BY DAVID W. HORNBECK

EVERY CHILD CAN SUCCEED: OUR OPPORTUNITY; OUR RESPONSIBILITY

A Joint Project
of the
Agency for Instructional Technology
and the
Council of Chief State School Officers

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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EVERY CHILD CAN SUCCEED flows from two essential premises. First, virtually all students have the capacity to learn a commonly challenging curriculum. This first premise embraces two important facts: a) with the rare exceptions of some who have severe disabilities the phrase **virtually all** students means just that; b) the content of the curriculum (algebra versus general math, for example) and the expectations (associated with the curriculum) by the school/teacher of the students should be the same for rich and poor, black and white, male and female, native English speakers and those for whom English is not their first language. **What** is taught should be relatively the same. **Where** it is taught; **when** it is taught; **how** it is taught; and **who** teaches it can and should vary. The variation is rooted in whatever pedagogical strategy that produces student success.

The second essential premise flows from the first. We know how to teach all children successfully. To teach successfully students who are "at-risk" of school failure is not mysterious. It is being done by ordinary human beings in ordinary schools with students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

Ideally, all teachers-to-be, experienced teachers, and all, who in any way bear responsibility for or care about the nation's health and its schools, should have on-site experiences in one or more classrooms where "at-risk" students are being successfully taught. The old adage says "seeing is believing;" believing the job can be done is crucial to success.

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To take teacher candidates from 1,500 teacher training institutions and teachers from 16,000 school systems, in the United States alone, to visit a diverse set of successful classrooms is, of course, impossible. However, through video, successful classrooms and the teachers of America and Canada can be brought together.

The project described in this working paper has the following objectives:

--*Teachers and teachers-in-training will be intellectually and emotionally engaged in understanding the key elements of good teaching and successful instructional programs for our most vulnerable youngsters*

--*Present and future teachers will develop the capacity to "see" good practices in their own teaching and in that of fellow teachers. That capacity will enable each teacher to grow professionally as present skills improve and new skills are added to one's teaching repertoire.*

--*All viewers will be introduced to and, hopefully, committed to the two essential premises. Each is an absolute pre-requisite to success in activities related to 'at-risk' children and youth in classrooms, schools, school systems or states/provinces.*

--*School board members and other decision-makers will be provided with a compelling basis for committing the resources and other support that is necessary to do this crucial job.*

--*The capacity of state/provincial education agencies will be strengthened to meet their responsibilities related to in-service staff development; teacher education; teacher certification; and the development of substantive curriculum and instructional strategies aimed at high achievement for youngsters at risk.*

The project will consist of five components:

1. The first component will be a 30-minute motivational videotape. Its content would include a short demonstration of the economic and human consequences of continuing to fail to serve successfully millions of our most vulnerable youth. This introductory program would then present several vignettes of effective instructional practices and programs, as a preview to the other tapes of the project:

the vignettes will illustrate the point that we do know how to be successful with "at-risk" students. The demographic, political and economic facts will be presented dramatically but not speculatively. Similarly, the criteria for choosing instructional examples will be made clear since it is important to maintain bedrock credibility while we are illustrating as factual and doable what many do not believe is possible.

This introductory tape can be used effectively in at least two contexts. The most important is the opening class of thousands of in-service training programs and teacher education courses. The level of our expectations shapes the character and depth of our learning. If each teacher or teacher-to-be "expects" to learn strategies effective with "at-risk" youth, the specific programs that follow will more likely fulfill that prophecy. The second context in which the introductory tape can be useful is one in which the audience would be policy makers and opinion shapers. This is the broader community of those who must decide that it is important to succeed with all students and that, knowing how to do that successfully, we should commit the resources and other support necessary to do the job.

2. The second component and the heart of the project will consist of video tapes that illustrate teaching and instructional programs that have demonstrably worked with "at-risk" youth. Each will at least have been successful in raising the achievement of "at-risk" youth measurably and significantly.

   In choosing strategies, the project will define "at-risk" youth as youngsters who, on the basis of experience with them, or with children similarly situated, are not likely to graduate from high school. They will probably meet one or more of three characteristics: they are poor; they do not speak English as their first language; and/or their school achievement is low.

In choosing strategies, the project will select ones that have been evaluated in a manner that yields measurable achievement results. Several of the practices or programs may also claim success in achieving more difficult to measure gains in areas such as improved attitudes, strengthened self-concept, and higher self-esteem. Where that is so it will be emphasized appropriately. However, no practice or program will be selected which has not also produced measurable achievement results.

Finally, the instructional practices and programs chosen will be ones with results that are very significant, not just marginally so. One of the most important underlying images that must be pervasive in efforts to increase success with "at-risk" youth is the idea of maximum competency expectation for all children in contrast to minimum expectations. Average or so-called grade level performance in the United States is generally too low. That fact is revealed in the context of criterion-referenced testing results and is seen in most international test comparisons. Thus, if we cast the effective strategies in this project as ones that simply yield performance at present grade norms we will have set our sights too low. While we will have improved achievement, we will have achieved too little. Fortunately, there are programs and practices that do raise achievement of "at-risk" youth both measurably and significantly. Those will comprise the primary examples of the tapes in this second component of the project.

We envision two groups of tapes through which teaching and learning about successful strategies will be achieved. One group of tapes will present a number of programs of a structured, organized character. The second group of tapes will concentrate on schools and classrooms in which outstanding results are being achieved but where systematic effort to categorize the good practices as identified programs has not occurred.

The type of issues and questions which will be highlighted in both groups of tapes and in a handbook described below will include those normally associated with teaching and learning: how to ask questions; how to be positive in the face of a student's wrong answer; how to connect the contributions of one student to that of another; how to deal with disruptive behavior; how subject matter mastery and pedagogy are both important; how parents contribute or do not contribute to student learning; what about wait time; who gets called on and how often; what is the significance of class size; what are different ways to organize and govern the classroom; how do we give all students a sense of success; how does good communication occur among all who contribute to a student's success.

To illustrate the types of programs we envision in this first group, the following are offered as examples:

A. Project SEED -- begun in Berkeley, California twenty years ago, Project SEED has demonstrated in many schools that one of the most prestigious academic subjects, mathematics (not arithmetic), can be taught successfully at a relatively advanced level to previously low performing "at-risk" students.

B. James Comer's program in New Haven, Connecticut and Prince George's County Maryland -- Dr. Comer's program is a process not a package of magic teaching strategies. It focuses on understanding child development and on basic school management principles that include the home as a fundamental ingredient. The results are very significant.

C. Success for All -- Begun in Baltimore in 1987 in Abbottston Elementary School, this effort resulted in Abbottston students achieving markedly better than control students from pre-K through the third grade; special education placements dropped from 18 to 2; and a previously 20% retention rate was eliminated. Tutors, family support and an innovative approach to reading are among the key intervention elements.

D. Continuous-progress programs of which there are a number of successful examples. In each, students proceed at their own pace through a sequence of well-defined objectives, but they are taught in small groups (not "pulled-out") composed of students at similar skill levels. There is constant regrouping according to performance on specific skills.

E. Cooperative learning programs. Again, there are a number of successful examples. Students work in small mixed-ability learning teams and receive certificates and other recognition based on the performance of all team members. Instruction is to skill-based sub-groups.

E. Intensive supplementary programs. These include: 1) preventive tutoring programs at the early childhood level using specially trained adults; 2) remedial tutoring programs using adult volunteers or older students; 3) computer assisted instruction.

The foregoing examples are distinguished by the fact that they produce significant achievement gains by students who meet our definition of "at-risk." In addition, each one has been designed and implemented with the pre-conceived intention to replicate it elsewhere. It should be noted that in these tapes emphasis will be placed on the arrangement for and actual interaction of teachers and students.

The second group of tapes will concentrate on schools and classrooms where student achievement is significant, and where learning strategies and activities have not be labeled as part of a program.

At the school level, one prime example is in the school in East Harlem where Deborah Meier is the principal. Ms. Meier, in fact, has said, "You can't replicate a school any more than you can replicate a family, but you can learn from a good school like you can learn from a good family." We will want to capture the ethos, the practice of a school like Meier's Central Park East Elementary School to illustrate an important way in which a school becomes a family; in which children are treated consistently with courtesy and respect; where the child's interest is encouraged; where children leave with "solid confidence in

their personal judgment;" and where children demonstrate significantly high achievement levels. There are a number of other schools, including the Marcus Garvey School in Los Angeles and the Dunbar Elementary School in Atlanta, where similar outstanding results have been achieved.

In this second group of tapes, we will also present actual spontaneous classroom instruction under the direction of outstanding classroom teachers. Again, significant achievement results must have been obtained.

In presenting the programs in Group I and the schools and classrooms in Group II, the video models will include elementary, middle and high school examples. In addition, the illustrations will include a focus on youngsters who speak English as their second language as well as focusing on those whose first language is English.

No single tape in either Group I or Group II can or is intended to supply a cookbook or formula for good teaching. Each of the program models as well as the school and classroom demonstration models will make clear that teaching and learning is often quite complex, is very contextually rooted and depends on the interaction of multiple strategies within the classroom. This interaction can be facilitated or impeded by the wider school, family and/or community environment. At the same time, each model will also make it clear that however difficult the environment or the personal obstacles faced by a given set of youngsters, we can succeed.

The learning which will take place will result not from a rote step-by-step implementation of something contained in the tapes. Instead we expect that out of the viewing, self analysis, group discussion and further inquiry, local school and school system implementation of strategies reflected in or provoked by the tapes will unfold. The process will be dynamic, not static. The project's interest is not in any one of the models or examples presented but in a commitment to use only instructional strategies that work. That commitment presumes the two essential premises set forth earlier and an acceptance of responsibility toward all children.

Each tape will focus on a particular program, school or classroom. Much of the footage in each will be on actual school or school related activities in process. At the same time that footage will at times be set off by segments of teacher/other staff/parents/ or other community narration and/or voice over.

Each tape will begin with footage of the program, school, or classroom at work. The suggested format of use will then anticipate a period of discussion by the viewer. An accompanying handbook will provide facilitating questions, alternative answers, issues to be probed during discussion. There will then be a concluding piece of the tape in which relevant participants (including students where appropriate) from the program/school/classroom will be seen having a discussion around the same issues which are highlighted in the handbook. The issues and questions will be of the character identified above as those on which both groups of tapes will focus.

We expect the leadership in identifying the programs, schools and classrooms to be depicted in the tapes to include Asa Hilliard of Georgia State University; Robert Slavin of The Johns Hopkins University; and Lily Wong Fillmore with colleagues Lois Meyer and Douglas Macbeth of the University of California at Berkeley.

In addition, we will have two project advisory groups. One will be a group which will monitor the development of the project closely from a substantive perspective. It will include persons such as those named above plus a teacher, a principal, a school system staff developer, a teacher educator and at least one state and provincial department of education staff person responsible for the improvement of teaching. Each of these persons will be chosen based on a demonstrated understanding of the purpose of this project and previous related experience.

A second advisory group will be one consisting of at least one representative of each participating education agency. It will meet on at least one occasion during the development of the project to ensure that the project is unfolding in a manner consistent with the participating agencies' expectations and needs.

3. The third component of the project will be a videotape(s) that can be used to train personnel in each local school system to make and use their own videotapes as a training strategy in at least two ways. First, many school systems have teachers who are relatively outstanding when judged against the kind of criteria of student success we have used. This component of the project will illustrate how each local system can supplement the first rate library of materials envisioned in the preceding section with their own tapes of such local quality teachers and/or schools. It will be very powerful for a teacher to view a friend, the teacher across the hall, or one met at the school system picnic the previous Sunday engaged in successfully teaching "at-risk" youth.

   Second, the tape(s) in this component will assist local personnel in knowing how to use video of teachers in training to point out their strengths and weaknesses in much the way that videotaping is used to train lawyers in courtroom technique and tennis professionals use tape to try to perfect the "hacker's" serve.

   Moreover, this third component, focused on locally designed video, encourages the growing commitment to empowerment at the school level. It flows from and supports the notion that we are well-served if we can unleash the creativity and energy of staff in the school.

4. The fourth component of the project will be the handbook mentioned several times above. It will consist of the following parts:
   A. Suggestions of numerous ways in which the project materials can be used. For example, in the in-service context we would encourage training consisting of several sessions which have a cumulative impact, rather than one-shot workshops. The handbook would reinforce the ideas of classroom follow-up with peer coaching, circuit rider assistance and even in-school program facilitators to help schools make the transition from traditional methods to more effective programs and practices.

B. Background information on the programs, schools and classroom teachers which are the subject matter of the project's tapes. In the tapes themselves, we will only introduce schools, classrooms and programs. We will provide substantial additional information in the handbook to enable states/provinces and their school systems to follow-up with those in whom they are particularly interested.

C. A discussion guide to assist the faculty in the teacher training or in-service program to use the videotapes of instructional programs, schools and classrooms most productively.

D. A guide to supplement and expand upon the videotape teaching local personnel the use of videotaping as a training tool.

5. The fifth component of the project consists of a training program for participating agencies' staff in the use of the project's materials.